



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sula Ranger District

7338 Hwy 93 S.
Sula, MT 59871
406-821-3201

RECEIVED

MAY 10 2007

File Code: 1950/2230

Date: May 8, 2007

Ravalli County Commissioners

Dear Interested Citizen,

The Bitterroot National Forest proposes to close two vacant grazing allotments and keep four allotments open in a vacant-reserve status. All six allotments are currently vacant and have been so for ten or more years. No permittee holds a Term Grazing Permit on any of these allotments at this time.

The two allotments proposed for closure are the Rye Creek Allotment located East of Darby in the Deer Mountain area and the Claremont-Haacke Allotment east of Stevensville located in the Claremont and Haacke drainages. Both these allotments are unfenced and contain several sections of private land inholdings.

The allotments proposed to be kept vacant and used as reserve allotments include: the Bertie Lord Allotment northeast of Sula along the East Fork road; the Piquett Creek Allotment south of Darby off the West Fork Road; the Little Sleeping Child Allotment located northeast of Darby off the Sleeping Child Road and the Main Sleeping Child Allotment also located northeast of Darby off the Skalkaho Rye Road.

A field inspection this spring will evaluate the vacant – reserve status of the Main Sleeping Child Allotment.

These vacant allotments will be used intermittently as relief pastures when an active grazing allotment needs to be rested for resource protection reasons such as wild or prescribed fire, weed treatment, drought or other resource related circumstances. Grazing will comply with current guidelines and Forest Plan Standards. The proposal does not include reissuing a Term Grazing Permit for any of the vacant allotments. A map showing the allotment locations is attached.

The Forest will determine whether or not the decision may be categorically excluded from further analysis following a review of specialist reports, biological evaluations/assessments, public comments, and other pertinent analyses.

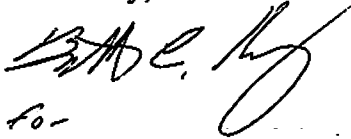
If the allotments qualify for a categorical exclusion, it is intended that a Decision Memo will be issued for the vacant allotments under the authority granted the Forest Service by the U.S. Congress in Section 339 of the FY 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-447).

Send your written comments to: Amber Lewis, Acting District Ranger, Sula Ranger District at 7338 Highway 93 S, Sula, MT 59871. Comments should be received by close of business June 8, 2007.



For further information concerning this proposal, please contact Gil Gale or Diane Bessler-Hackett at the Sula Ranger District, 7338 Highway 93 S, Sula, MT 59871, or by phone at 406-821-2318 or 821-2337.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "AMBER LEWIS", with a stylized flourish at the end.

AMBER LEWIS
Acting Sula District Ranger

Enclosure: (1 map)

BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST VACANT ALLOTMENTS 2007

